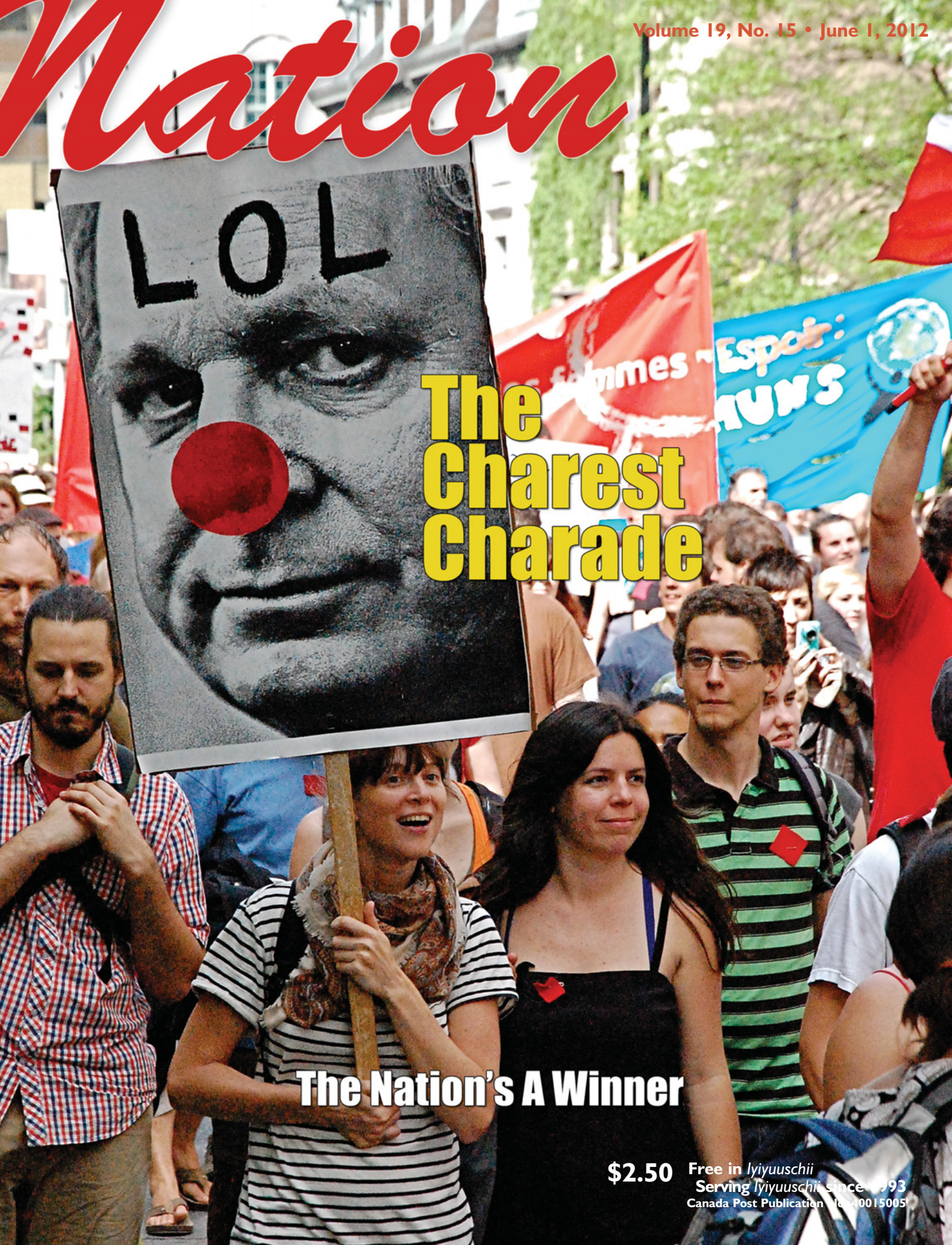
Volume 19, No. 15 • June 1, 2012

Nation



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Bill 78 is the wrong lesson

By Will Nicholls

One must love the government no matter what. At least this is the feeling one gets when they take a look at Quebec's Bill 78 entitled *An Act To Enable Students To Receive Instruction From The Postsecondary Institutions They Attend*. Nowhere in Bill 78 is any real enabling of students to attend their respective schools, but instead it limits their right to protest against the provincial government.

If the students protest too much the school must inform the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports of why they cannot provide them with an education. Then the Students Union or Association offices and dues (money) will be taken away from them. Students may end up being responsible for any damages as a result of the protestors.

It came about as people were frustrated with the protests that held up traffic to and from work. Protests were sensationalized by the government and the media. Even though they were largely less destructive than some of the hockey riots you wouldn't have known it. Feeling they were looking ineffective Quebec's National Assembly overreacted.

While there are those who agree with the new law parts of it seemed to have slipped by Quebec voters. Section III of the bill deals with Provisions To Maintain Peace, Order and Public Security.

It states: "16. A person, a body or a group that is the organizer of a demonstration involving 50 people or more to take place in a venue accessible to the public must, not less than eight hours before the beginning of the demonstration, provide the following information in writing to the police force serving the territory where the demonstration is to take place:

(1) the date, time, duration and venue of the demonstration as well as its route, if applicable; and

(2) the means of transportation to be used for those purposes.

"When it considers that the planned venue or route poses serious risks for public security, the police force serving the territory where the demonstration is to take place may, before the demonstration, require a change of venue or route so as to maintain peace, order and public security. The organizer must then submit the new venue or route to the police force within the agreed time limit and inform the participants."

This section does not mention students at all and could apply to any demonstration or protest. As such (and the entire law) can be considered an infringement of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It includes such fundamental freedoms (section 2), as the: freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and the freedom of association.

Even if this section only applies to the students it is still something we should all be concerned with. If one part of society can be denied their fundamental rights and freedoms then so can we all. Canada is considered a democratic society with socialist leanings, but this latest law does not honour that tradition. It is something we would have expected in the worst of communist, dictatorial or monarchical governments.

Finally shouldn't we be teaching our youth and future leaders something better than Bill 78?

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photo by:
Lyle Stewart

Commodes throughout the ages

By Sonny Orr

There are a few things that mankind cannot avoid and must deal with – yes, it's about what to do with all that human waste we pump out from our innards on a daily basis. Back in the day, going about your personal business and hygiene wasn't really that personal, but rather something that everyone did. Today, with porcelain potties and thousands of commercials touting the best in software (in this case, toilet paper) for your delicate derriere, which when used outdoors, can placate even the most violent bears into submission.

Yes, it's poopie time again. Time to pull out that newspaper or magazine or for some people, the knitting needles and get down to the business of waste management. Why do I bring this up now, well... it's something that no one really talks about during coffee breaks and it's the most least talked about subject during dinner gatherings, so someone has to bring it out in the open.

Back before paper was a valuable commodity, used only for writing and artwork, toilet paper was something that wasn't used or even heard of. What was used one may ask? Whatever was available and handy was usually the answer, but from what I recall, any old moss did the trick. Throughout time, waste was just another duty, that when you were caught off guard, was quite often the topic of heated discussion and a chance to embarrass someone with gentle ribbing and jokes that could be used on the next victim.

This wild waste was not enough to cause any environmental damage as humans were greatly outnumbered by the other denizens of the Wild North, until the modern world came along. But before that, the outhouse was in everyone's backyard and would be there for years and years, until it was time to move to another location.

One outhouse I remember quite well was the one made for the airline at that time. It was a 12-seat outhouse and once the plane landed on the soft sand runway, passengers would run out to the back and get the only break for the rest of the day. This made up for some rubbing of shoulders as there was no walls to give you privacy and everyone would continue their conversation where they left off. I guess this was normal for those days. However, toilet paper was still a new thing and it was valued greatly. I know, because my boss at that time, would hide the precious paper in his desk. I had to bring my own, but I learnt that it was easier just to run home and get it over with instead.

At some point in history for the Cree, this type of life changed forever when the indoor toilet was introduced into every home and toilet paper became just another household item to purchase at the store. Back then, soft and fluffy paper was unheard of and Preparation H was the standard remedy for those off-kilter days for the unfortunate many who suffered from ruffassitis, but they were a hardy folk. Today, nothing touches my touché unless it is certified organic, sewer-rated and scented.

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THANKS TO: Air Creebec

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005
ISSN #1206-2642
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.

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Celebrating Eeyou Istchee's finest

Wemindji banquet honours current and former members of the police force

by Dan Moczula

The Wemindji Community Hall was filled with police on April 13, but there was no emergency and no arrests were made. The community of Wemindji held a banquet recognizing the accomplishments of the Eeyou Eenou Police Force and to give back to those who have given so much to the community.

The 100-strong crowd was comprised of police officers and their family and friends, members of the community, and numerous dignitaries, including Chief Rodney Mark, Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff, Chairman of Police Commissioners Ronnie Ottereyes and Police Director Reggie Bobbish.

Four current police officers from Mistissini and Wemindji were honoured with speeches and plaques.

Bobbish gave a speech honouring Mistissini officers Willie Gunner and Charlie Gunner, both of whom were awarded a plaque for "An Act of Heroism and Bravery".

These officers were recognized for not hesitating to risk their lives in the line of duty to save others.

Officer Charlie Gunner risked his life when he rescued an unconscious civilian from a burning building and Officer Willie Gunner performed life-saving CPR on an injured individual. Bobbish concluded by saying, "Officers Charlie and Willie Gunner, you have my deepest respect and consideration and I commend you for your bravery."

Officer Rhonda Georgekish was presented with a plaque for "Excellent Performance" and Officer Betty Stewart with the plaque for "Most Improvement". Besides their accomplishments on the force, these two dedicated Wemindji officers helped plan the banquet and see to its successful execution.

The banquet also honoured past members of the police force.

Former police directors David Kakabat, Isabelle Natawapineskum, Paul Mcdougall and Elmer Georgekish were recognized with gift baskets and the gratitude of the Wemindji Cree community. These officers had all previously managed the Wemindji detachment.

Lieutenant Calvin Hester was among the organizers and those honoured. With eight years of experience serving Cree communities, Hester is a prolific member of the Eeyou Eenou Police Force.

The evening was one of filled with emotion. Commenting on how audience members responded, Hester stated, "There were times when some got very emotional because it was so touching."

One of the more charged moments of the night occurred when Jeremiah Mistacheesick presented a memorial slideshow dedicated to the life of his brother and former Wemindji police officer Eric Mistacheesick. Afterwards Jeremiah Mistacheesick gave a heartfelt speech that brought tears to some members of the audience.

Luckily the entertainment throughout the evening balanced gravity with levity.

Local talent treated the crowd to vocal performances in between speeches and ceremony. Marisa Georgekish and Cane Stewart sang a duet and Rosie Steven and Sarah DeCarlo both performed solos.

The evening could not have occurred without the cooperation of both civilian and police organizers. A fundraising committee worked tirelessly to acquire the money that funded the event. The efforts of the committee made it possible to express thanks to some of the hardest-working men and women in Eeyou Istchee through ceremony and gift.

Much to the regret of all, auxiliary officers were not invited due to budgetary constraints. Auxiliary officers are part of the Wemindji Police Force, however their training is shorter than that of a commissioned police officer.

Hester, a former auxiliary officer himself, later expressed his regret at this and extended his gratitude to auxiliary officers for their work.

Overall, the police banquet was a success and a night to remember as it brought the community and those who serve it together. Hester summed up the night succinctly, "Everybody loved it."

Lieutenant Calvin Hester commemerates Wemindji Police Officers by Shawn Coonishish

Betty Stewart is presented with Most Improvement plaque

Rhonda Georgekish is presented with Excellent Performance plaque

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Illegal practices

Corruption and prosperity face-off along Route 167

by Mark Della Posta

Although the Plan Nord has the potential to bring millions of dollars of investment into northern Quebec, and specifically Native communities, it seems as though some have come to see it as a way of making a quick buck.

In a statement released by the Chibougamau Chamber of Commerce on May 16, at least two local businesses have been approached by outside businesses asking them to produce fraudulent receipts for the contracts awarded in the construction of Route 167. These receipts would give the impression that contractors were buying much of their merchandise from Northern companies, one of the stipulations in the Route 167 contracts.

"There are incentives for companies working on Route 167 to buy merchandise from northern Quebec," said Jo-Ann Toulouse, president of the Chibougamau Chamber of Commerce. "Contractors must get 40% of their materials from the North."

According to Toulouse, these types of attempted fraudulent practices directly contradict many of the objectives and potential benefits that come with the $80 billion plan. She argues that these types of practices, in which businesses were offered a few thousand dollars to produce the receipts, bring significantly less money into the region than if companies would comply with the stipulations in the contracts being awarded.

"When you get these people coming in, and making these offers, it becomes an irritant," she said. "Think of the investments that would come into the region if every company was forced to spend at least 40% of their budget in the North. It's to everyone's interest to cooperate and report these incidents."

Geoffrey Kelley, Quebec's Minister responsible for Native Affairs, although not familiar with this exact case, commented on the important role for Native communities in the development of northern Quebec and the partnership he envisions between First Nations peoples and the rest of Quebec.

"We want Native communities to profit from the economic engine that is the Plan Nord," said Kelley. "What we want is for strong First Nations businesses to profit alongside other Quebec businesses."

Kelley cited the recent Route 167 contract awarded to the Cree of Mistissini, in which the Cree were given responsibility of roughly a quarter of the road, in a contract worth over $70 million.

Kelley also urges businesses that are approached with these types of offers to reach out to the authorities.

"Fraud is fraud," he said. "You can't fraud the government, you can't fraud the taxpayer. In the last few years, the government has adopted many ways of avoiding fraud. The government is determined to stamp out corruption at all levels of the industry."

Toulouse applauds the businesses that came forward with information about these attempted bribes, but she says it would be naive to think that these fraudulent practices are not more widespread. Local businesses often find themselves afraid to miss out on the short-term money that comes with these types of deals.

Jo-Ann Toulouse, president of the Chibougamau Chamber of Commerce

"FRAUD IS FRAUD, YOU CAN'T FRAUD THE GOVERNMENT, YOU CAN'T FRAUD THE TAXPAYER."

"It's been happening for years," said Toulouse. "It's difficult doing business in the North. You don't want the money to run out. You don't want the well to dry up. [For many businesses in the North], a little money on the side is better than nothing at all.

"This is happening," she said. "This is illegal."

Although these types of allegations are serious, and could lead to possible jail time for those offering bribes as well as the nullification of contracts, Toulouse says that there is not yet any hard evidence that this is happening.

"It is not a police issue at this time," she said. "There is no burden of proof yet. We have approached the ministry of transport and have given them the information."

Toulouse encourages anyone who is approached in this manner to come forward.

"I'm proud of those that are coming out," she said. "I truly believe we can do extraordinary things if we cooperate."

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Former Chief of Pikogan passes away

Former Chief Jean-Paul Rankin passed away on May 20, 2012 in Pikogan, Quebec. The community will remember him for his active political and social involvement.

Rankin served on the council of this Abitibiwinni First Nation for eight years before being elected Chief on June 17, 2011. However, he resigned for personal reasons on December 14 later that year.

A council member, Rankin pushed for the further economic development of Pikogan and played a role in the successfully lobbying for the legal recognition of the community.

His funeral was held May 24 at 2:00 pm at the St. Catherine Church of Pikogan.

New Montreal hangar for Air Creebec

Due to the important role that Air Creebec will be playing in the development of the Plan Nord, the provincial government has granted the airline $1.3 million in non-refundable financial support to relocate its hangar at Montréal-Trudeau Airport.

In total, this project, worth an estimated $9.9 million, will create nine jobs and consolidate 62.

This new project will see the demolition and rebuilding of Air Creebec's hangar at Dorval Airport. The new facility will be used for aircraft maintenance and the building of new administrative offices and a waiting room.

Air Creebec will also be assessing the potential market for adding new routes. This may include an air link to Matagami, but this would be contingent on development opportunities in the Nord-du-Québec region.

The financial support for this project came on behalf of Pierre Corbeil, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Minister responsible for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region and the Nord-du-Québec region and MNA for Abitibi-Est and Sam Hamad, the Minister of Economic Development, Innovation and Export Trade and Minister responsible for the Capitale-Nationale region.

Drug and alcohol busts result in significant seizures

The Eeyou Eenou Police Force's efforts to curb drug and alcohol trafficking in Cree communities saw success this spring, as officers apprehended a handful of suspects in possession of almost $25,000 of illicit substances.

The first of the busts occurred March 31, when an officer in Whapmagoostui stopped a man carrying a box. A quick search revealed the contents to be marijuana with a street value of $4,500.

The second occurred in Chisasibi, on April 6, where a 55-year old man and his 49-year-old wife were arrested with over 200 grams of cannabis and hashish, street value around $9,000.

The coup de grace, however, happened just weeks ago, on May 2 in Wemindji. After receiving a search warrant for a vehicle of interest – suspected to be importing drugs into the community – the Wemindji Detachment of the EEPF uncovered $14,500 worth of drugs.

The suspects were detained and, and after evidential review, charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking cocaine and marijuana. They lack previous criminal records, so were released from incarceration under strict conditions, but are due to appear in court shortly.

"The [EEPF] will not stand by and allow drug and alcohol traffickers to take over the social wellness of our people," said Police Director Reggie Bobbish in a statement to the community. "We have set our tactical approach, focus and aim, on disabling trafficking networks and dismantling organized crime throughout Eeyou Istchee."

Comic strip courtesy of Tundra Comics: www.tundracomics.com

feature

Being responsible

Nuclear critic Gordon Edwards discusses uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee

By Jesse Staniforth

If there's one thing that Dr. Gordon Edwards of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility wants you to know about uranium mining, it's that a single mistake can last 100,000 years.

Invited to Mistissini on Tuesday, May 15, by the Association of Employees of Northern Quebec, Edwards gave a speech at the local school and was interviewed by several radio stations. His message was overwhelming: uranium mining is a clear and present danger to the Eeyou Istchee, and a danger to all of Quebec.

While he outlined a huge array of details to support his case, perhaps the most important is this: uranium can't be mined alone. When it's brought out of the ground, it is part of a body of rock that contains many other extremely dangerous radioactive materials. These other radioactive materials, however, have no market value. After the rock has been ground down into a fine dust to allow the miners to extract the uranium, 80% of the radioactive dust is left over. The problem only starts there – for the next 100,000 years, it remains extremely dangerous to human beings.

"It behaves like calcium in the body," said Edwards, "which means it goes toward the bones, the teeth and the milk. This causes blood diseases, bone cancer and head cancers involving the jaw bones and teeth."

One of the most toxic by-products left behind by uranium mining is radium, the element that Marie Curie discovered – which killed her. As it disintegrates, it changes into toxic radon gas, which has been responsible for the deaths of many uranium miners over the years.

"It turns out that radon is produced internally when you have radium in your diet," Edwards explained. "It's transported to your brain and released as radon gas. All of this was documented even before the first nuclear reactor was built."

Edwards cautioned that the Otish Mountains is an exceptionally dangerous place for such mining to occur, because the site contains rivers flowing away in several different directions.

He said, "This is the worst possible place to have a repository of dangerous material – in a fine sand! We're asking for trouble. It's a transport mechanism that can get this material into the food chain. The human race hasn't been successful of disposing of anything, and now what we're trying to do is to use technology to prevent nature from recycling what it wants to recycle. Nature is the great recycler, everything makes the rounds. Bringing this stuff to the surface as a hard rock, grinding it into sand, then expecting nature is not going to be able to get at it, that seems like an empty promise."

While regulators argue that our technology is sufficient to safely contain this material, Edwards asked the public to consider the Great Pyramids of Egypt, which have been standing only 5,000 years. They are not a great example of humanity's ability to take care of structures over long periods of time, and the results of uranium mining will be around 20 times longer.

"Any failure of containment in the thousands of years to come means this stuff will get scattered into the environment and enter the food chain," he said. "It would be catastrophic. So we have to weigh these facts against the short-term advantages. People want jobs and economic growth, which makes sense, but with mining, those things are temporary. The consequences last far longer. Are the resources we have adequate to compensate for those consequences?"

There has never been uranium mining in Quebec, and in fact the government of British Columbia declared a permanent moratorium on the practice recently,

"EDWARDS CAUTIONED THAT **THE OTISH MOUNTAINS IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY DANGEROUS PLACE FOR SUCH MINING TO OCCUR**, BECAUSE THE SITE CONTAINS RIVERS FLOWING AWAY IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS."

Dr. Gordon Edwards of the Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility

while the government of Nova Scotia has banned all uranium mining and uranium exploration for safety reasons. That law goes so far as to mandate that anyone exploring for any other mineral, who discovers uranium in the process, must stop immediately.

"That radioactive material is well-protected under the Canadian shield," said Edwards, "and very little of it ever comes to the surface. But even opening up the ore body – not mining it – is asking for trouble by creating pathways that weren't there before."

Unfortunately, he said, what Strateco Resources is seeking is to do exactly that in the Eeyou Istchee.

"They want to build an elaborate excavation project, which they call 'Advanced Exploration'," Edwards said. "It will be a ramp that winds down through the rock, closer to the ore body. The purpose is that it will allow them to open up the ore body, to drill into it and determine how potentially profitable the ore body could be. Once they do that, there's no way they can ever restore the integrity of the rock vault that was already there, protecting us from that radioactive material. In Nova Scotia, it would be illegal."

There is a genuine controversy here, Edwards said, and people are not getting the resources they need to educate themselves about it. In 2010, the international group Physicians for Global Survival passed a unanimous resolution calling for a worldwide ban on uranium mining.

"To put it in perspective," explained Edwards, "if uranium was an element essential for survival, you'd cope with the danger as best you could. But the only commodity for which uranium is absolutely essential is nuclear weapons. When you look at methods of energy production, nuclear energy is only one of many. Similarly, when it comes to medical isotopes, we don't need to have uranium for that. They can be produced with laboratory devices. Nuclear medicine was in existence long before there were any reactors."

Nicholas Bégin, a media-relations officer with Quebec's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNRF), was predictably more measured in his statements about uranium mining.

"The choice of whether or not to impose a moratorium on the exploration and mining of uranium is an important question," he said, "which the government of Quebec does not take lightly. It's still too soon to talk about a moratorium on uranium exploration and mining in Quebec. The working group set up by the Côte-Nord's Health Services Agency is gathering together all available information with which to evaluate potential risks related to uranium exploration and mining. The MRNF awaits recommendations from this working group in order to make an informed decision."

However, Bégin said his ministry is relatively confident about the safety of uranium exploration.

Until they receive the recommendations of the Côte-Nord's Health Service, he said, "The MRNF's position is based on the response of [the Ministry of Health and Social Services] given in a briefing paper produced in collaboration with [the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment, and Parks] and MRNF: the exploration of uranium poses no risk to public health. This position is reinforced by the Canadian Nuclear Security Commission, the independent federal organization that rigorously regulates the uranium industry in Canada."

This position caused Edwards to bristle.

"The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission," he said, "their job by law is to educate people. They have a legal duty, according to their charter, to disseminate objective scientific information about the regulation process and the potential hazards associated with the materials. They're supposed to take a proactive role in educating people, but they don't. On the front cover of their annual report a year ago, they ran the headline: 'Fact: Nuclear in Canada is Safe'. This sentiment was repeated several times through that report. Their website has an almost patronizing tone. Instead of educating people about potential dangers, they simply say 'we make it safe'. This is not education."

It is not surprising, then, that Edwards was not comfortable with the MRNF's position on uranium exploration and mining. However, Edwards was quick to underline that he does not suspect the mining companies or the regulatory agency of deliberately courting danger or conspiring against the public.

"The mining companies don't want to hurt anybody," he said. "The regulatory agency is trying to do a good job. But people have a right to know what this stuff is and what it does."

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Ready the workforce

New Cree grads ready to work in the mines

By Amy German

With mining projects popping up like dandelions all over Eeyou Istchee, so are training programs for the Cree in order to get as many into the workfore and reaping the benefits of these projects.

At the end of March, a group of executives from Goldcorp's Éléonore Project near Wemindji met with 17 Crees graduating from an Iron-Ore Extraction program that was being held on-site at the Xstrata mine in Matagami. Their goal was to court the students for new jobs that will be available at the Éléonore Project.

According to Steven Wanamaker, a Regional Projects Consultant at the Cree School Board (CSB), at the moment there is so much interest in training for the mining jobs to come at various projects throughout Eeyou Istchee that for every course that opens up a new waiting list begins for it.

He proudly boasted that of the 18 Crees who had originally started in the Iron-Ore program, 17 had successfully completed it with only one student having to drop out due to health reasons. Considering the fact that usually within a group of 15 high-school students, often only 10 graduate, this particular group has done incredibly well.

Students in this particular program are now ready to work on-site as iron-ore extractors, a job that will see them perform multiple tasks deep underground.

"They drill holes – they are the ones who drill the tunnels. They also have to secure those tunnels to make sure that they don't collapse and so there's also cement and netting work involved.

"Of course, they remove and extract the ore which is the vital part of the job, and probably the dirtiest," said Wanamaker.

This recent batch of graduates included two women and, despite the fact that the work is tough and may not be for everyone, Wanamaker said even a petite woman is capable of doing the work. To be an iron-ore extractor you don't need big shoulders or have to be a strong male, you just need to be able to hold all of the equipment and process it.

As far as prerequisites for this program, applicants need to have a Level 3 education if they are coming out of high school. For adults who are already working and want to be retrained, the necessary requirement is to have at least a Level 2 in languages and math and be able to pass the General Development Test, which is a generalized science, math and languages test.

Considering the fact that there is going to be over 1,000 jobs in the mining sector within the next five years, there is training available for just about everyone at every skill level.

According to Wanamaker, those with a Secondary 4 education can train to be mill operators, take the truck-driving course or apply to the industrial and maintenance mechanic program.

There will also be work for those who don't want to spend a lot of time training as Wanamaker is currently working with the CSB and Cree Human Resources Development (CHRD) to develop an "essential skills for mining program". This will be for those who want to work in general maintenance as janitors, cooks, housekeepers and labourers in the mines as this kind of work does not require special skills.

"Our job at the CSB and CHRD is to put programs together to supply these skills to the Crees in the territory," said Wanamaker.

To find out more, contact your local guidance counsellor or employment department.

Power to the people

Montreal protestors march against the draconian Bill 78

Written by Jesse Staniforth Photos by Lyle Stewart

Nothing else sounds quite like a riot squad's concussion grenade. It's more than a gunshot, more than a firework. The explosion it makes sounds more like the word "boom" than anything else you've ever heard explode. And when it happens right above your head, no matter what you're doing, it's hard not to take a moment to reflect on how really impressive, and terrifying, a sound it is.

Unfortunately, what I was doing on Friday night, May 18, when the Montreal riot squad launched a concussion grenade that exploded about six or seven metres to the right of my head, and just above it, was running from the Montreal riot squad.

Part of the 5,000-strong crowd that had come out to protest the passing of Premier Jean Charest's authoritarian and likely unconstitutional Bill 78, I'd joined the march at its beginning in high spirits, cheering and chanting with the rest. When I picked my friend David up from his métro stop as the march went by, we marvelled at how big it was, that it could be going down one street in huge numbers while still coming up the opposite direction one block away.

I felt good because we were all there together to challenge that odious law that infringed on both the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms' guarantee of liberty of assembly and association, and on the same guarantee in the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. On the picket sign I was carrying, I had copied out the Section 3 of the Quebec Charter, reading, "Every person is the possessor of the fundamental freedoms, including freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association."

JUSTE
THERE MAY BE TIMES WHEN WE ARE POWERLESS TO PREVENT INJUSTICE... BUT THERE MUST NEVER BE A TIME WHEN WE FAIL TO PROTEST IT!

And naturally I felt that the law – the higher law of the Charter – was on my side. I'm no criminal, or I wasn't until they passed Bill 78. It was intended to be the bill that cooled off the student strike that's been underway since February, except it did the opposite of legislating an end to those hostilities. Instead, it banned all protests of 50 or more people that have not received permission no later than eight hours in advance from the police, who must be provided with information about the protest location, protest route and protest duration.

Police, under the law, have the right to deny you the permission to protest, and also to change your protest route as they see fit. As well, the law bans protest within 50 metres of any educational institution – meaning all of downtown Montreal is off-limits to demonstrators – and made it a criminal act to tell people (even over social media like Twitter) about a protest that police haven't given permission to. For protest leaders, the fines can be as high as $125,000, which is a lot more than the $50,000 you can get fined in Quebec for political corruption. And that's something Charest's government might have in mind, since right now, the Charbonneau Inquiry is beginning to present the findings of its investigation into organized crime in the construction industry and possible connections between the Charest government and the mafia.

The reaction to Bill 78 was instant – the whole city of Montreal seemed to be enraged. In my neighbourhood, the red square that symbolizes support for the student movement began to appear in windows up and down every street, as it took on a second meaning of opposition to Bill 78. Under those circumstances, I headed for the protest, where I was intent on exercising the rights guaranteed to me in both the charters of this province and this country.

That was a little naïve, and I should have known. After all, many readers in the Eeyou Istchee know better than to trust the Quebec government to hold to their promises on paper. But there I was, cheerfully marching down St. Urbain Street toward the very spot where I'd been pushed around by riot cops a month ago while attempting to report on Charest's Salon Plan Nord.

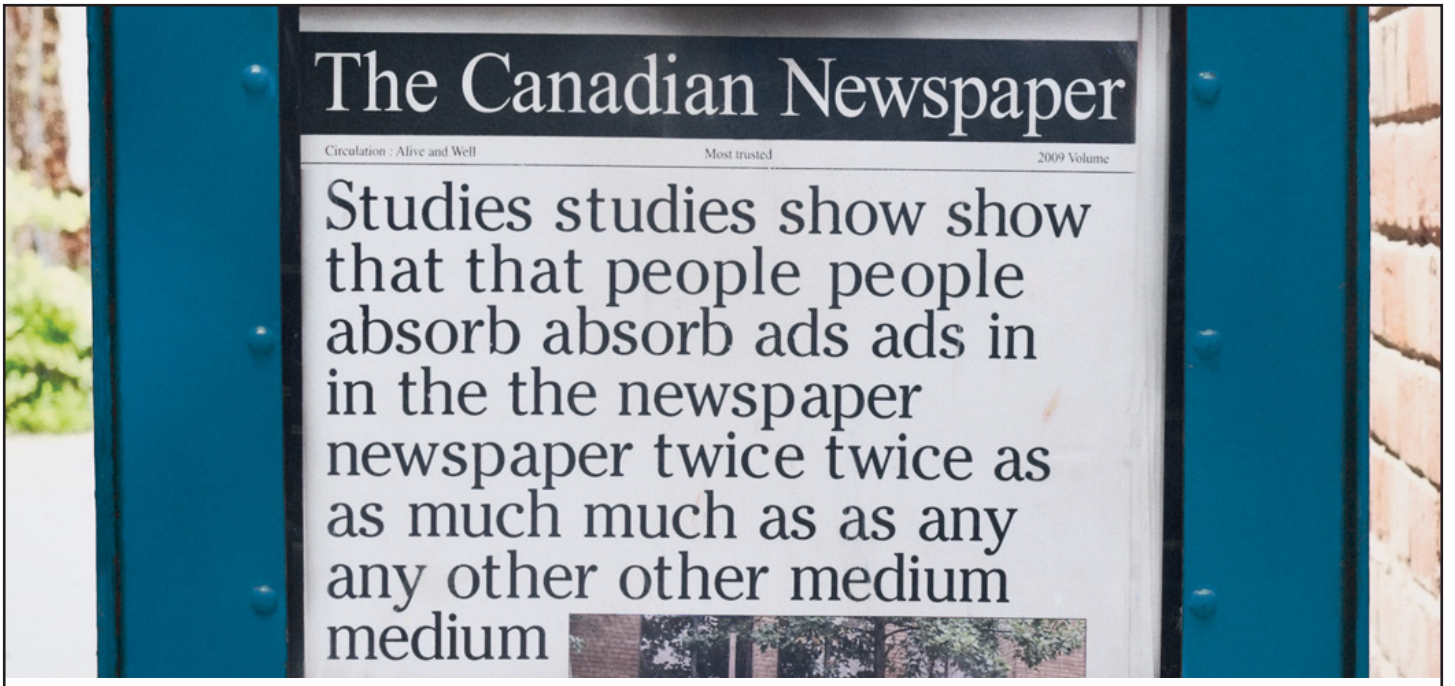
The demonstration was huge: we were coming to Viger Street and already the head had gone around the corner when I called a friend in the back who said it was still filing past De Maisonneuve – a solid four blocks behind us. A detachment of the riot squad – maybe a dozen armoured cops with clubs and other weapons – was marching alongside us, and a group of angry protestors had gathered extremely close behind them, walking in exaggerated goose-step and sieg-heiling, chanting "SS-PVM! Police politique!"

This struck me as a pretty stupid and offensive move, but everyone was angry about the authoritarian new law and these guys were obviously upset at the riot detachment for following us. They'd been marching along beside us for about a half-hour, but as soon as the group began goose-stepping and saluting, they became agitated. Then, without a moment's warning, they turned: several began clubbing the goose-steppers, while one fired a rubber-bullet gun at someone (I don't know whom), and another used a can of pepper-spray to hose down everyone who got too close to them. I was luckily a few people away, so rather than get the spray in my eyes, I just breathed it in. That was unpleasant enough and as close as I wanted to get.

Suddenly the crowd split into two, and I was standing with my back to a store window in the middle of the space that opened up between the two groups, trying to decide whether to go to the right, the way my friend had gone, or to retreat the way I'd come. Hurrying my decision, one of the armoured cops was pointing the rubber-bullet gun at me, and I thought, "They're probably ready to shoot just about anyone." Behind the cop with the gun, the others were zip-tying one of the goose-steppers into plastic cuffs. Still holding my sign, I moved very slowly toward the crowd in front and rejoined David. We

kept moving, especially when we noticed a new detachment of the riot squad coming toward us from the west on Viger, beating their shields with their batons.

Following the main group, we headed into Chinatown, where the streets aren't wide and there's not a lot of place to run. This was perhaps a poor choice on the part of whoever was leading the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march, but by the time we'd made our way back up to the corner of René-Lévesque, we'd almost forgotten about the pepper spray. We stepped into the intersection with the rest of the crowd, but the mood changed abruptly enough that we could feel it.

Looking around to try to locate the source of the sudden agitation, we saw up ahead there were cops on horseback, moving toward us. That struck me as bad news, but still I couldn't understand what was happening until I heard the first concussion grenade, a little ways off, and then more of the flat popping of the rubber-bullet gun, which also fires tear-gas canisters.

"We'd better turn around," said David, and we began to stroll calmly through a parking lot as the sounds of gunfire and grenades picked up. I think we figured if we walked away, we would show we were just peaceful citizens and no threat to anyone, but in retrospect this was also naïve. There was a lot more noise behind us and I turned around to see a cop with a riot gun shooting some sort of strange projectiles at us – they flew through the air like grapes, trailing smoke, and I watched as they landed on the ground behind an elderly couple not far away from us. Then the grapes exploded into smoke. Others were landing nearby and doing the same. It was a totally alien experience, as though it was raining exploding frogs.

"Don't worry," I said to David, "That's just smoke. I don't think it's gas."

"No," David said, choking, "that's definitely gas." As soon as he said it, I felt it. Coughing and blowing snot, we cut through the parking lot, jumped over a low wall, and were walking toward the lawn of a building to our left, thinking we were out of harm's way, when I heard the ominous thumping of the riot squad banging their shields again. I turned and realized they were just behind us, charging at a dead run. Most of the crowd that had been broken off at the intersection saw them at the same time. Chanting together, "On reste calme! On reste calme!" we hustled, trying not to panic and trample anyone, but to move as fast as we could. The whole crowd was fleeing, many in terror. That was when they threw the grenade that exploded not too far from my head, the grenade that made me stop and think, "Jeez, whatever else you have to say about that, it sure makes a hell of a sound."

Around the corner, the riot squad followed us, clubbing people in the back and cross-checking stragglers with their night-sticks. They didn't seem to want to arrest anybody, only to push us away. A few phone calls later we learned that someone had thrown a Molotov cocktail at the police in the front – a vicious, brutal act – but that rather than simply catch and detain the person or people responsible, the police took the opportunity to launch a frontal attack on the demonstration to break it up as much as they could. The fact that they attacked us – so far away from the action that we had no clue it had even happened – was a sign of their intention to make the whole march pay for the actions of the lunatic with the firebomb. Later they claimed that they had given us three warnings to disperse on the loudspeaker. Maybe they did, but if so it was so far away from the area that they attacked that it could hardly be taken seriously.

After that, the march was declared illegal, but that was no surprise. At a great number of the marches that have been happening daily for nearly a month, the Montreal police has used the opportunity of a small handful of people in the front behaving aggressively or throwing things at the riot squad to declare the entire protest illegal, meaning everyone who doesn't leave immediately is guilty of a crime. That part isn't protected by the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms. Suspiciously, they often let the marches go, announcing that though they're illegal, the police will allow them to continue "unless there are any more illegal acts". It's a strange balance, being told by the cops that the non-violent marching you're doing is illegal, but you can keep doing it so long as you don't break the law.

A half-hour later, the march regrouped, and an hour on it was even stronger than before, with as many as 10,000 people, stretching for eight or nine blocks at a time. That didn't change much: Bill 78 had gone into effect that day, and as the 10,000 marched, the riot squad charged into group after group, shoving and bludgeoning crowds with nightsticks, tear-gassing them, and dousing them with pepper spray. The crowds haven't get any smaller. As this issue went to press, possibly the largest political demonstration in Quebec and Canadian history took place in Montreal in opposition to the law, drawing anywhere between 250,000 and 400,000 people. At press time, however, the law remains in place.

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Let them eat caribou

The federal government expresses its apathy towards First Nation food security

By Dan Moczula

On May 16, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, concluded a politically contentious 11-day visit to Canada for an investigation into poverty and hunger.

During his investigation De Schutter visited several First Nation communities and lower-income urban areas. His visit and findings sparked a political backlash from the Conservative government.

The mere fact that the UN sent a Rapporteur to investigate food security in Canada touched a nerve among Conservative politicians.

Jason Kenney, Citizenship and Immigration Minister, stated, "It would be our hope that the contributions we make to the UN are used to help starving people in developing countries not to give lectures to wealthy and developed countries like Canada. And I think this is a discredit to the United Nations."

Before he was sent to Canada, De Schutter visited nations such as Syria, China, Mexico, South Africa and Madagascar.

Despite a high UN development ranking, Canada faces severe problems with hunger and food access in First Nation communities and inner-city neighbourhoods.

The latest estimates put the number of food insecure Canadian households at 900,000. These households contain 2.5 million people or 7% of Canada's total population, all of whom do not know when and from where their next meal is coming. These people depend on food banks and other forms of government assistance.

Members of First Nation communities are disproportionally represented among these households.

Geographic isolation and high costs for healthy food have led to two seemingly contradictory effects on Native communities. Natives are far more likely to be among the hungry while also suffering from diabetes and obesity.

Geographic isolation and high costs for healthy food have led to two seemingly contradictory effects on Natives Communities such as Attawapiskat

Traditional methods of acquiring food, such as hunting and fishing, are threatened by environmental degradation and as a result more Natives are turning to cheaper unhealthy processed foods.

Even those communities that have access to healthy foods find it challenging to promote a healthy lifestyle. Cynthia Kapashesit, an employee at the Moose Cree Health Centre, said it is harder to live healthy because "access to healthy food is minimal; it would be nice to have more variety."

De Schutter acknowledged these challenges and criticized existing government programs, such as the Nutrition North Canada Program (NNCP), for inefficiencies, lack of Native involvement, and even raising the cost of food.

He stated, "What I've seen in Canada is a system that presents barriers for the poor to access nutritious diets and that tolerates increased inequalities between rich and poor, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples."

De Schutter called for a national food conference to reform existing systems of food distribution through taxes on unhealthy processed food products, increasing locally grown food, and more subsidies for healthier food.

For Native communities, De Schutter suggested more support for traditional diets, Native input in government food welfare programs, and increased consultation about development projects that affect First Nations.

There is little political will among Conservatives to implement such policies despite the fact that during the last federal election the Tories promised a national farm and food strategy to support local farms thus increasing food security.

The Conservative government rebutted De Schutter's suggestions with vigour.

Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq had harsh words for De Schutter. "He's ill-informed. I found it a bit patronizing – another academic studying us from afar who's going to make comments about the challenges we have," she said.

Members of the Liberal Party and New Democratic Party have echoed De Schutter's sentiments and decried the Conservative response.

Liberal interim leader Bob Rae challenged the government to address the issues at hand "rather than attacking the person who delivers the message".

In a response to De Schutter's assessment, Aglukkaq assured everyone that Native people should not need to worry about food security because "they hunt every day".

The Nation's a winner

Nation walks away with a handful of awards at the QCNA

By Amy German

Amy German, Will Nicholls, Neil Diamond, Heidi Rooke

1st and 2nd place winners Pierre Coulombe and Richard Lawson

It's not very often that we at *the Nation* toot our own horn but once per year we gather with about 30 other Quebec-based community newspapers and magazines for the annual Quebec Community Newspapers Association (QCNA) conference and awards banquet. And, once again, I am proud to say that we emerged from the event victorious.

Cruising the friendly waters of the St-Lawrence River, this year's nominees embarked on an AML cruise-line ship for the gala on May 18 and disembarked five hours later as winners.

In total *the Nation* came home with five awards: 3rd Place for Best Overall Newspaper, 2nd Place for Best Advertisement, Lyle Stewart received a 2nd Place Best Column Writing award, newcomer Pierre Coulombe received a 1st Place Best Arts & Entertainment Story and I managed to pick up 2nd Place for Best Feature Story.

While *the Nation* does manage to get nominations and win awards from the QCNA every year making it look like wining these awards is a small feat, it really isn't. Unless you are a part of this association, you wouldn't realize exactly how stiff this competition is.

"It is very hard to get nominated. You have basically about 30 papers and as everyone is trying to get the awards you will get multiple entries from each paper because there are multiple writers," said Nation co-founder and editor-in-chief Will Nicholls.

He went on to explain how at times there can be up to 120 competing articles for just one category and so being picked for a first, second or third place is quite an honour and a win within itself.

After 20 years in the publishing business, Nicholls reflected that receiving anything from the QCNA only goes

Jane George, Richard Tardif, Pierre Coulombe, Trevor Greenway

Richard Tardif and Lyle Stewart

to show just how polished of a product *the Nation* really is and how much work goes into it.

"This year's awards ceremony went really well and it goes well every year. We are up for nominations every year and we come out well in this. It shows the professionalism of the paper and the professionalism of the people working for it as they are judged by their peers in this business.

"Obviously we are doing something right because there are people out there who don't win anything and are not nominated for anything and we are. This is something that I am very proud of," said Nicholls.

New to the awards crew this year was Pierre Coulombe, a French teacher living in Waskaganish who freelances for *the Nation*.

For Coulombe, getting called for a first place award for a story he wrote came as a big shock.

"I was moved by winning 1st place, it really means a lot to me. I didn't expect it – I am a freelance francophone, why would I win," said Coulombe.

Despite his own doubts he placed first in front of so many other hopefuls.

And hopefully he, along with every other one of our writers and staff, will emerge victorious with awards at next year's gala…. We can only hope.

Trevor Greenway, Amy German, Lucy Scholey

Top 3 Best Overall Paper winners: 1st place The Suburban, 2nd Eastern Door, 3rd The Nation

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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

June is Elder's Health Month. The Cree Health Board celebrates the traditional knowledge of elders. This wisdom helps Cree lead balanced, healthy lives.

"SCRAPPING THE CAP IS ESPECIALLY ABSURD WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT THE CONSERVATIVES ARE ASKING UNEMPLOYED CANADIANS TO USE THE INTERNET TO GET THEIR BENEFITS AND FIND WORK."

Disconnected

Government funding is cut for cheap community internet access

By Jesse Staniforth

Sometime toward the end of the first week of April, the people who ran sites of the Community Access Program (CAP), bringing free or low-cost internet access to libraries and community centres across Canada, received a startling email: effective the week before, their funding was cut off.

According to Industry Canada, the CAP program was begun in 1995, at a time when the majority of Canadian households did not have internet access. However, because the government claims 80% of Canadian households are connected to the internet, Industry Canada does not believe the program needs to continue.

"I was really shocked," said Eric Stackhouse, chairman of the Nova Scotia CAP association, who was interviewed by the CBC when the news broke in April. "I had hoped that we would have some discussion before they made that decision, but as they've done in the past, they simply sent out letters. There's great disappointment and a lot of frustration. They say it's achieved its purpose, but they never say what that purpose was."

According to Stéfanie Power of Industry Canada, who responded by email to a request for an interview, the program objective was "to encourage participation in the knowledge-based economy by maximizing the accessibility of computers and the Internet at public access points, such as public libraries, across Canada. Today, the majority of Canadians are connected to the internet at home, while many more have access through their mobile devices." While touting the study that determined 80% of Canadian households have internet access, Power admits that this figure did not take into account populations living on First Nations reserves.

"Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada is working with other federal departments, provinces and the private sector to improve broadband access within First Nation communities," Power says. "The First Nation Infrastructure Fund supports First Nation proposals to enhance communities' access to the internet. AANDC also supports a number of First Nation Regional Management Organizations, which provide comparable activities that enhance the effectiveness of classroom instruction through the development and enhancement of technological knowledge in school.

"The government of Canada," she adds, "recognizes the importance of a nationally accessible digital infrastructure and narrowing the digital divide. Through the Broadband Canada: Connecting Rural Canadians program, the government is taking action to extend broadband internet access to as many unserved/underserved households as possible. As result of the program, broadband coverage in NWT and Nunavut was extended to approximately 1,220 and 9,300 households respectively. Federal funding for CAP ended on March 31, 2012, as scheduled."

Nonetheless, Power does not comment on questions about the composition of the 20% of the Canadian population without access to internet, despite the problem that this portion of the populace may very well be those who need free access to internet the most.

Romeo Saganash, NDP MP for Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou, released a statement via his website slamming the decision to end the program.

"Scrapping the CAP is especially absurd when you consider that the Conservatives are asking unemployed Canadians to use the internet to get their benefits and find work," said Saganash. "Studies by Statistics Canada show that almost half of Canadians earning $30,000 or less a year do not have internet access at home. CAP is useful in finding a job, preparing for school or communicating with the community."

Openfile.ca reports the cuts to CAP sites also mean cuts to jobs in the more than 1,000 CAP sites across Canada, a difficult burden to bear at this time in our economy. NDP industry critic Guy Caron, meanwhile, associated the cuts to CAP with the ongoing defunding of libraries and community institution undertaken by the Harper government.

"All over the country," Caron said, "New Democrats are discovering that communities need the services provided by the program and hope the Conservative government will reinvest the $2 million so that libraries, community centres and schools can stay connected."

photo by Karim Mansour

Sacred right

Smoke Traders sheds light on the Mohawk-run tobacco trade in eastern Canada

By Martin Siberok

Visit the Mohawk community of Kahnawake and the number of smoke shops within the community is staggering. Along the major routes cutting through the reserve, smoke shops line the roadsides. Every second property seems to have a small shed on it selling cigarettes. It seems like everyone is involved in the cigarette trade. And according to a new documentary, Smoke Traders, it's not far from the truth.

Directed by Objiway filmmaker Jeff Dorn for Rezolution Pictures, this 51-minute documentary sheds light on the Native involvement in the cigarette business in Quebec and Ontario – more specifically, the Mohawk involvement.

Focussing on several individuals, this engaging film points out that most Mohawk communities have lifted themselves out of poverty thanks to the tobacco trade. Brian White, a former smoke runner from Akwesasne, is now turning his attention to setting up a solar panel business. However, as he discovers creating a legitimate business is tougher than expected. Instead of enjoying the quick cash fix transporting cigarettes brings, White now spends his time filling out grant applications and waiting for distant government bureaucrats to make decisions on his future.

The charismatic Robbie Dickson is a successful Kahnawake entrepreneur, who owns and runs Rainbow Tobacco, a multi-million dollar company. A trained civil engineer, he realized early on that the tobacco business was a profitable venture and subsidized his university education running cigarettes.

While the cigarette trade might be a lucrative source of revenue for these communities, it is an "illegal" undertaking in the eyes of the federal and provincial governments. The reason is simple: no taxes are being paid. As cigarette factory manager Bob Hill from Six Nations, Ontario, points out the federal government is a business, and they're "not getting a piece of the pie".

If you look around the various Mohawk reserves, you quickly realize how important the tobacco trade has been for the local economy. The communities no longer look like impoverished neighbourhoods, but boast new houses, new businesses and new pride. As stated in Smoke Traders, the industry helps fund sports and recreation activities for both young and old as well as

community and school events. In many ways it has supplanted government grants and hand-outs, and boosted the standard of living of every community.

As Queenie, a cigarette runner and proud home-owner, states, "It gets us off welfare."

Traditionally, tobacco has played an important role in Native culture. The film points out that tobacco is one of four sacred plants along with sweet grass, sage and cedar. As Dickson proclaims, "We have a right to the tobacco plant given to us by the Creator to help our people."

For Dickson, who pays federal taxes and has acquired federal licenses to move his products legally, the tobacco trade raises the issue of sovereignty. With the RCMP busting his legitimate dealings with First Nation communities in Alberta and Manitoba, he is willing to fight the authorities in the courts and judging by his resolve, he would take all the way to the Supreme Court. As he states, "It's our birthright to do it."

The Canadian tobacco industry is implicated in the illegal trade by supporting the cross-border flow of cigarettes coming into the country from the States. In 1980s and 1990s, as public opinion turned against smoking, huge tax increases and its effects on the markets, these multinationals needed new ways to maintain their massive profits and had no problem supplying Native cigarette traders with product manufactured in the US and smuggled across the border to be sold to non-Natives tax free.

Sure there is an ethical question surrounding selling cheap cigarettes since everyone knows that smoking kills, but at the same time it offers a bountiful source of revenue for people who need it. "It's the Indian way to use what the Creator gives us," says White.

Smoke Traders is an insightful, defiant, and at times humorous portrayal of the existing cigarette trade. The result of three years of research, this informative documentary sheds light on an economic grey zone that is indicative of the way the Canadian government deals with all things Native.

photo by Lisa M. Roth

photo by Lisa M. Roth

photo by Jeff Dorn

Too good to be true

Is your miracle diet really that miraculous?

By Amy German

With the obesity rates in Eeyou Istchee exploding, it should come as no surprise to anyone that the kinds of products sold to those battling the bulge like so-called "nutrition shakes" have also started to rear their heads around the communities.

Right before Goose Break, we at *the Nation* were contacted by a doctor at the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) who had grown concerned over the increasing number Crees going on nutrition-shake diets in an attempt to lose weight. Some were even opting to bring them into the bush for Goose Break to eat as an alternative to traditional food.

This became a cause for concern for Dr. David Dannenbaum as it has always been the position of the CBHSSJB that when it comes to healthy living for Crees, there is nothing better than eating traditional food and obtaining it traditionally as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Beyond the rejection of traditional food, Dannenbaum says that there are a lot of other problems with going on a protein-shake diet plan as they can be a lot of hype and not live up to their promises.

The first issue he outlined is that these products are Big Business.

"The goal of any distributor is to get other people to sell his products, and then he makes more money. Take what they say with caution," said Dannenbaum.

While the good doctor said it was wonderful how there are so many Crees are concerned about their health and trying to lose weight, these shakes may not be the best way to go about it.

Dannenbaum says the biggest problem with these products is that they are a quick fix that is being applied to a life-

long issue of unhealthy living. And, as a result, they can have consequences such as regaining the weight just as soon as the dieter goes off the shake diet because they did not adopt a healthier lifestyle.

"These shake diets work based on the number of calories available in each portion and some of these shakes are very low in calories. But then when you add things like yoghurt, milk and fruit it adds up.

"As they work totally based on calories in, some people eat only that and starve themselves for the rest of the day," explained Dannenbaum.

According to Dannenbaum, one way of looking at weight loss is to imagine your body like a bank and your food intake like deposits into an account – calories in, calories out. It does not matter where the calories come from, or how you burn them off, but the balance has to be negative to lose weight.

When it comes to these shakes, the real problem isn't so much that they don't work as they do sometimes work in the short term because they are very low in calories. The real problem is that people don't end up losing weight in a healthy way.

Another issue with these shakes is that while they try and market themselves as an essential ingredient to a "healthy lifestyle", they often can be anything but that because eating healthy involves more than just "calories in". It is important to spread your calories over healthy foods including fruits and vegetables, meat and alternatives and dairy to get all of the fibre, protein and vitamins needed to be healthy.

"What ends up happening is that the weight loss isn't sustainable as it is not a lifestyle change. It is just a quick fix to quickly lose weight. In the long run this is not effective because the problem isn't just about weight, but rather adopting a healthy lifestyle. Weight gain is a consequence of engaging in an unhealthy lifestyle.

"What people need to ask themselves is if they are living healthy? And if not, how can they eat healthier, and be more active? This is not easy, but the real success stories we see in the communities have found their own solutions to truly make living healthy a priority in their lives," said Dannenbaum.

Once more, these types of weight-loss products will often boast about the magic type of "science" behind their products with claims that they contain all sorts of special "metabolism boosters" to help their clients.

According to Dannenbaum, there is no science behind these shakes and no such thing as "metabolism boosters" or food you can eat or drink that makes you lose weight.

The only thing that can actually boost an individual's metabolism is exercise.

"I always think back to something that the pharmacists at the Jewish General Hospital used to say, 'that your medications are not going to exercise for you!' The same can be said for these protein shakes – they will not make you live healthy. The focus here needs to be on healthier living and not on weight because you will actually lose weight if you live healthy," said Dannenbaum.

But what does living healthy actually mean? For some. the attraction to these kinds of products is that they are simple and the meal is portion controlled, even if the product isn't satisfying.

While some literature on nutrition will say that a portion of protein is comparable to the size of a deck of cards, for individuals who have been consistently overeating for a long time, this may not be very satisfying. There is other literature suggesting you weigh out every single item on your plate, but this can also prove frustrating for many.

"It is important not to turn eating into a science where everything is measured to the gram. Instead, the focus should be on realistic portion sizes – for the unhealthy foods as well as the healthy foods.

"Portion size is a huge problem, especially when people eat in restaurants where you can't control your portion size. This becomes a real problem as there are many people in the communities who eat out many times a day," said Dannenbaum.

Instead of measuring out every single bite, Dannenbaum suggests that people simply look at their plates and decide as to whether it is a lot of food or not and whether it is a healthy meal.

For those who don't know how to prepare meals for themselves in realistic portions, the CBHSSJB provides dieticians or CHRs in every community to consult with and some communities even offer cooking demonstrations.

If you are not sure as to whether or not your diet is suitable for you, the association of Dietitians of Canada has a list of "red flags" on their website to aware of when it comes to selecting a diet and diet products. Your diet may be too good to be true if it:

- promises fast weight-loss (more than 2 pounds /1 kilogram per week);
- recommends a very low calorie diet plan (below 800 calories per day) without medical supervision;
- tries to make you dependent on their company products rather than teaching you how to make good choices from regular grocery-store food;
- does not encourage long-term realistic lifestyle changes including regular exercise and a healthy diet;
- provides weight-loss counselors who do not have any training or qualifications;
- employs salespeople who also act as "counselors". Weight management counselors may gain from sales commissions on company products. They should not be trying to sell you anything;
- promotes unproven or false weight loss aids like starch blockers or fat burners.

For more info on choosing a weight-loss program and to see more "red flags" for dieting: www.dietitians.ca/Nutrition-Resources-A-Z/Factsheets/Weight-Loss-and-Control/Guidelines-for-Choosing-a-Weight-Loss-Program.aspx

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Congratulations Nursing Graduates

And now, a new chapter begins.

Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay wishes to extend our sincere congratulations to our esteemed Nursing Graduates. You have so much to be proud of.

For the past four years, you have dedicated your time and energy to achieve your goals. We admire your sacrifice, commitment and hard work. You have completed the first crucial step in building an exciting career in the health services field.

And now, a new chapter begins. It is time for you to apply those hard-earned skills to shape the future of healthcare. Once again, we wish to extend to all Nursing Graduates our sincere congratulations and best wishes for the future.

Human Resources Department of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay:

Chisasibi: P. O. Box 250, Chisasibi, QC J0M 1E0
Telephone: 1-819-855-2744 | Fax: 1-819-855-2680
Email:jobs.reg18@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Montreal: 277 Duke St., Suite 203, Montreal, QC H3C 2M2
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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Weddings galore

Galerie du Marriage offers a one-stop deal for all engaged couples

By Akiva Levitas

The summer wedding season is about to get into full swing with many couples taking advantage of the beautiful weather. Getting ready for a wedding can get pretty stressful with all the planning involved and coordinating needed. So how is a newly engaged couple going to handle such a daunting task?

A good place to start would be the recently opened Galerie du Mariage. Located in downtown Montreal, at the corner of St. Catherine and Mansfield streets, the gallery conveniently houses all of the necessary wedding services from photographers and videographers to exquisite designer wedding dresses.

With only a few short weekend wedding expos in the city every year, having access to all of these vendors in one location throughout the year will definitely streamline the planning process of all couples.

Along with catering to couples planning weddings, Galerie du Mariage is also the perfect place for service providers who are interested in promoting their company year-round.

Couples can always stop by and take a tour of the gallery showcasing all of the services they have available. With three floors, there's plenty of choice when it comes to the planning your perfect wedding. Make sure to check out the catering section with the sampling of delicious cupcakes.

Every aspect of the wedding is covered in the gallery from the flowers, venue and décor to the actual wedding ring. Company executive Stacey May Nolan said, "Who wants to drive all over the place checking out the different vendors?"

Now with all of this convenience available let's not forget about who really the wedding is about and that is the bride. Now every woman should look like a princess on her wedding day and with the designs of Mila Rivkin, the in-house wedding dress designer, that dream can become true.

Featured in all of the major wedding magazines in Canada, Rivkin's designs easily stand out with their intricate designs and embroidering. In her studio, the bride is the centre of attention. Standing in the centre of a runway with a huge mirror at the end, the studio on the second floor of the gallery is designed to make her look and feel like a princess.

Emigrating to Canada from Latvia 15 years ago, Rivkin brought her education at the Académie des Beaux Arts as a designer to her work here in Montreal. She was recognized for her design work in 2010 when she won the Prestige Award celebrating her work for the Bless'k Musical Theatre Company where she designed hundreds of costumes.

Planning for your wedding doesn't have to be stressful and with the convenience of Galerie du Mariage it can be done in no time. The experienced staff will guide any visiting couples around the three floors of booths helping them choose what is right for them in line with their budget constraints. When visiting it is also a good opportunity to pick up the catalogues and brochures that they provide to get a head start on your planning.

So if you're ready to take the plunge, make sure to arrange an appointment for a private consultation and you'll be well on your way to your dream wedding.

For more info:
www.galeriedumarriage.ca

2012

The James Bay Cree Telephone Book

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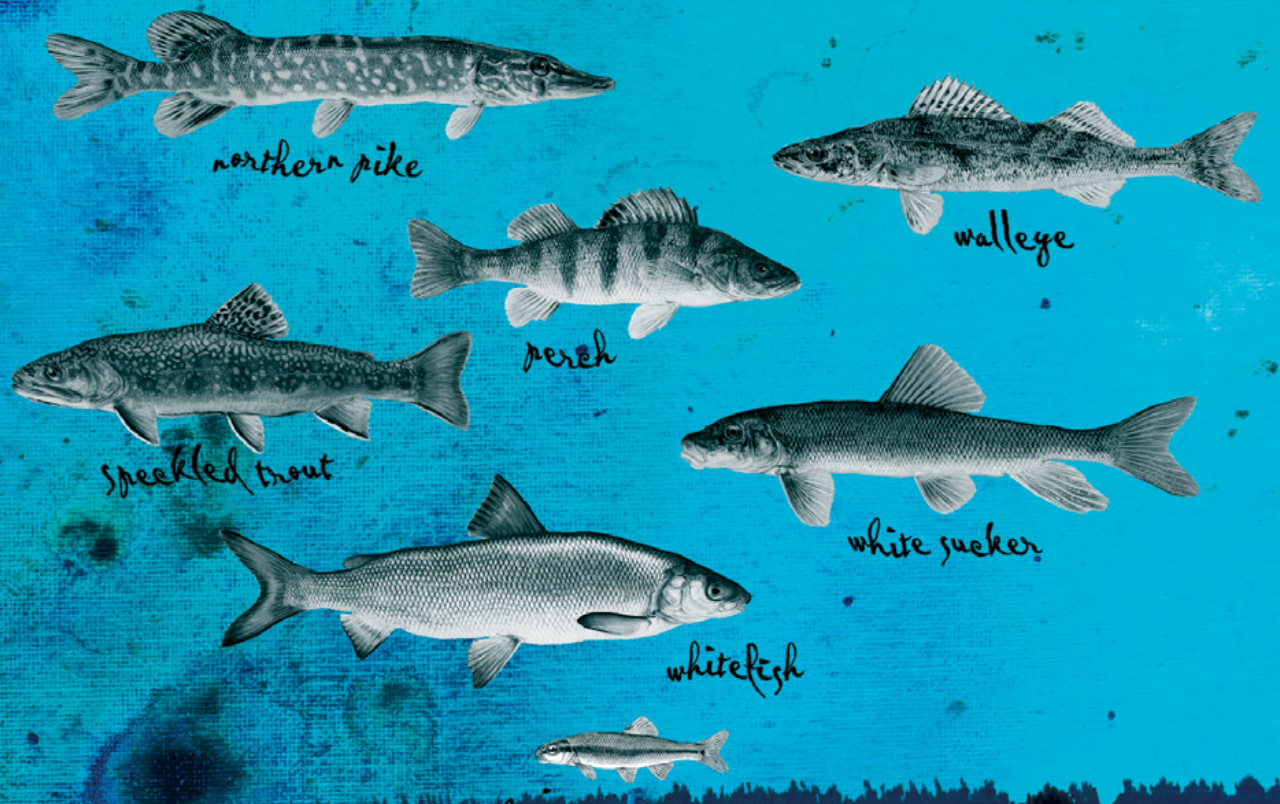

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by Lyle Stewart

The clanging of change

Throughout my neighbourhood in east-end Montreal this evening at exactly 8 pm, people stepped out onto their doorsteps or walked around the block banging pots and pans. This activity carried on for about 15 to 20 minutes all over the city (as I could read in the immediate Facebook updates) in a joyous cacophony of multiple micro protests against the Quebec government's imposition on May 18 of the "Special Law", or what I like to call, "martial law lite".

As I write, it's the 101st day of the student strike and the 101st day and night of consecutive demonstrations across Quebec, a remarkable and unprecedented achievement of activism and mobilization. Yesterday (May 22), I joined about a quarter million people marching – illegally, as it now happens, because the demonstration didn't have prior state approval – through downtown Montreal in an overwhelming popular rejection of the government's creeping fascism. It was a historic occasion, in which citizens of all ages and backgrounds showed up to celebrate and defend our fundamental democratic rights against a corrupt and increasingly brutal government.

As impressive as it was to participate in that massive and historic moment yesterday, I actually preferred the quiet little statement my neighbours and I made this evening. Living in the city, there are few neighbours I know by name, a few more I recognize by sight and many more whom I've never met.

But tonight, we all exchanged big smiles and knowing nods as we drummed on our pots and pans in rhythmic fashion until we felt that our point had been made. And after that short little moment of shared purpose, I feel less alone in the urban ocean because I now share a bond of solidarity with many folks on my block who were, before tonight, complete strangers.

That's a big danger for Jean Charest and his odious attempt to limit our access to knowledge while exploiting our outrage to eliminate democratic rights. Once people come out of their isolation to begin understanding our shared interests and then to insist on this essential element of the common good, the powers that be are in serious trouble.

Tomorrow evening at 8 pm, I'm going to step out on the sidewalk with my wooden spoon and metal mixing bowl once again. This time, I'm going to arm my five kids with the same dangerous weapons of democracy. And I'm going to introduce myself to a neighbour I would never have otherwise met. And I hope we will keep this up every following night, in more and more neighbourhoods throughout the province, until reason and common sense once again have a respected place in the councils of power in Quebec City.

It's a small aspect of the phenomenon sweeping our society, to be sure. But it has a long and honourable history. In New Brunswick, the Acadians call it the Tintamarre. Every year, the descendants of the original French majority walk out into the street banging their pots and pans in symbolic reminder of the fact that they still exist – more than 250 years after the expulsion of most of their Acadien ancestors by their British overlords in an early example of ethnic cleansing here in the New World.

To be sure, it might now be seen as a folkloric tradition, but it serves the same purpose as the appropriation of the tactic by the popular movement here in Quebec. Its power derives from the local affirmation of a broad-based sentiment. If neighbourhood folks begin understanding and identifying with the goals of those who are always portrayed as dangerous agitators, the big lie that justifies state repression is stripped naked. It loses its power to create fear.

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For a law to work, it has to have either broad support or a justified fear of repercussions for acts that would transgress it. This "Special Law", Bill 78, is an interesting test case. Justified by hysterical calls to restore "social order", the average citizen needs to believe it is necessary. When one's neighbours (i.e., not the masked, rock-throwing anarchists who star every day and night on the endlessly replayed TV news loops, but who actually are a very rare participant in the huge number of protests now taking place) start to question the need to surrender their freedom, it has a far greater impact on Madame and Monsieur Tout-le-Monde.

In Latin America, those who participated in this tradition over the past 30 to 40 years did so with heroic courage. They are called, depending on their gender, cacerolazos or caceroladas. Under brutal and bloody dictatorships in Argentina and Chile, local folks who otherwise would never be considered hardcore demonstrators much less outright insurrectionists would take to their neighbourhood streets with these essential kitchen tools to register their popular dissent. The urge to freedom and respect is universal.

Today, despite the death squads of the Argentinean junta and the sadistic nightmare of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, both countries have evolved into vibrant, healthy democracies. A simple act of banging one's pot, night after night, can help people change the world for the better. We each make the statement we can.

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Public Notice

Renard Diamond Mine Project
Public Comments Invited and Public Meeting Held

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) is conducting a comprehensive study environmental assessment of the Renard Diamond Mine Project located in Quebec. The public is invited to comment on the Environmental Impact Statement that describes the project and provides an overview of the potential environmental effects of all phases of the project.

The Environmental Impact Statement and more information on this project are available on the Agency's website at www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca (registry reference number 11-03-55169). To view a copy of this document, please visit one of the following locations:

Isaac Shecapio Sr.
Administration Building
187 Main
Mistissini QC
G0W 1C0

Public Library
650 3rd Street
Chibougamau QC
G8P 1P1

Written comments in either official language must be sent by June 22, 2012 to:

Renard Diamond Mine Project
Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Alain Bourgeois, Project Manager
901-1550, d'Estimauville avenue
Quebec QC G1J 0C1
Telephone: 418-649-6444
Fax: 418-649-6443
MinierRenardMining@ceaa-acee.gc.ca

All comments received will be considered public and will become part of the project file. This is the second comment period related to the environmental assessment of this project. A public comment period on the Comprehensive Study Report will be announced at a later date.

Public Meeting

The public is also invited to attend a public meeting where they can hear about the project and its potential impacts and provide their views to the federal government.

Public meeting details:

June 5, 2012 - 7:00 pm, Hotel Chibougamau,
473 3rd Street,Chibougamau, QC, G8P 1N6

For more information on this public meeting, please contact the project manager listed in this notice.

The Proposed Project

The project involves the development of a diamond mine by Stornoway Diamond Corporation on its Foxtrot property in the James Bay region of Northern Quebec. It involves the development of the mine and local infrastructure, such as open pits, shafts, mine adits, groundwater pumping, mill, kimberlite tailings impoundments, housing complex, airstrip and associated facilities.

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency administers the federal environmental assessment process, which identifies the environmental effects of proposed projects and measures to address those effects, in support of sustainable development.

Canada

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

Beaverfest promoted by Mattagami First Nation

by Xavier Kataquapit

I often think about how much my people, the Cree of James Bay, owe our lives to the animals, birds and fish on the land. Without these creatures we would not have survived. My ancestors actually followed a nomadic lifestyle that revolved around following food sources. We moved on the land constantly to gather and hunt.

This is why First Nation people have so much respect for the moose, beaver, bear, caribou, Canada goose, ducks and all kinds of northern fish. I remember some of the Elders back home watching nature shows on TV and they would be glued to the tube following the adventures of the various animals and birds on wildlife television specials from 1980s and 1990s. People up the coast still gather and hunt as part of the traditional pursuits on the land. It is very different now though as people are busy and employed and living fixed lives in communities so the time on the land is more like a vacation and must accommodate holidays.

I was happy to hear that my friends in Mattagami First Nation held their 11th Annual Beaverfest on April 28. The special day is dedicated to Amisk (beaver in Cree) and the sharing of the traditions and culture that surrounds one of the most important animals to my people. The event has become an annual tradition that everyone looks forward to in the spring and I know that the leaders, Elders and local community members enjoyed the day. The younger people also learned a lot about this busy little animal that has meant so much in terms of our survival on the land.

In the past, my ancestors and many First Nation people harvested Amisk, and in a way that nothing was wasted. We used the fur to make clothing, mitts and moccasins to shield us from the freezing winters. The beaver was also a regular part of our diet. I recall eating a lot of beaver when I was a child and then as times changed we began to move more towards purchasing food items from the store. Still, I recall the woody taste of Amisk stew my mom made often in a huge pot on the stove-top. The meat was fatty and sustained many people over the centuries.

With the coming of the Europeans there was a huge interest in beaver fur and this meant a way for my people to make a living as life began to change so abruptly for us all. Often this was the only way the grandfathers and fathers could make any money and keep their families alive.

Thanks to First Nation Councillor and Elder Leonard Naveau of Mattagami First Nation and the Gogama Fur Council, the traditions and culture surrounding the harvesting, fur preparation and the cooking of the beaver is being kept alive so that the young people of the community and area understand the important role of this water creature.

I know that Chief Walter Naveau is a great supporter of Beaverfest and I have seen him promote so many programs in Mattagami First Nation that focus on traditional teachings and cultural pursuits. He really understands the healing power of these teachings. It is great to know that people come from all over northern Ontario to participate in Beaverfest. The event grows every year and as always it is because of the dedication of so many volunteers in the community who put their time, energy and skills to work to keep Beaverfest alive.

We as First Nation people lived such a different life a couple of centuries ago. We never really stayed in one place. We roamed the northland with the feeling of being part of it. We were not afraid, had no anxiety and we did not worry or carry stress over so many things that cause difficulty for First Nation people today.

Everything we did had a purpose and it all had to do with surviving. That life has changed now but thanks to the people of Mattagami First Nation every spring we can get a glimpse of that time with a visit to Beaverfest.

CLASSIFIEDS

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to 9 year old Denzel Berryman from Waskaganish, he shot his first goose on May 2 at 5:15pm. We are all so proud of you and we are looking forward to hearing more of your hunting adventures. Love Mom, Dad, Gookum, sister Emerald and Darlene and the whole family!

EVENTS / RESOURCES

IArt Workshops for Youth: If you are between the ages of 15 and 29 you are invited to develop your creativity in weekly stone carving workshops being conducted at the Inter-Tribal Youth Centre located at 2001 boul. St. Laurent corner Ontario street (downstairs in the building of the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal). Workshops are every Thursday from 3pm to 6pm. For further information call 514-499-1854.

IN MISTISSINI: Free Resist-A-Ball classes for youth between ages 10 and 17 years. 4pm to 5pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Complex. Call 418-923-3248 ext. 224 for more information.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelpphone.ca)

Youth Helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parents' Helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Missing Children's Network: They'll help you find kids who have run away or disappeared. 514-843-4333 (www.enfant-retourquebec.ca)

Drug Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling Addiction help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

9 year old Denzel Berryman from Waskaganish's first goose

Health and Sexuality Resources Center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688 (www.nwsm.info)

Suicide Action Québec: 1-866-277-3553 (www.suicide-quebec.net/)

Residential School Survivors: A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources

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